



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

office file
10/19/54

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release OCTOBER 19, 1954

FIRST GULF TUNA CATCH LANDED

The first commercial catch of tuna in the Gulf of Mexico was landed at Pascagoula, Miss., early this month, Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay announced today.

The fishing vessel Santa Antonino, captained by John Rawlings, made port with 12½ tons of prime yellowfin tuna taken in the central Gulf region. The fish weighed about 100 pounds each.

Last spring Fish and Wildlife Service specialists aboard the exploratory fishing vessel Oregon discovered that yellowfin were widely distributed in the Gulf and could be taken at subsurface levels with modified Japanese-style longline gear. Three successful tuna trips have been made to various parts of the Gulf and have found that the central Gulf's northbound current, between 88° and 90° west longitude, affords the best yellowfin fishing at the present time. Making use of this information, the Santa Antonino proceeded to this area and reported catches as high as 9 tuna per 100 hooks, a very good showing for this type of fishing.

Another commercial vessel, a converted red snapper schooner operating out of Pensacola, Fla., also has begun tuna fishing in the Gulf. Commercial interests in Mississippi are now reported to be outfitting a longline vessel, scheduled to begin tuna operations soon.

x x x